## Off to College?



# Know the facts about meningococcal disease

- Meningococcal disease is a concern on college campuses, especially for
  - students living in dorms. In Washington, 20 to 30 cases are reported each year, including deaths.
- Common symptoms of meningitis include stiff neck, headache, fever, sensitivity to light, sleepiness, confusion, and seizures.

disability, and death.

Meningococcal disease

is a serious illness. The

disease can cause blood

infections and meningitis

(swelling of the covering of

the brain and spinal cord).

It can lead to brain damage,

A booster dose of meningococcal vaccine is now recommended at age 16 or older. Even if you got a dose before age 16, you need an additional dose before entering college.

Vaccination is your best shot at preventing meningococcal disease. There are two types of meningococcal vaccine. Both vaccines are at least 85 percent effective at preventing 4 of the 5 most common forms of meningococcal disease. Ask your doctor which vaccine you need.

The meningococcal vaccines are recommended for:

- Children and adolescents aged 11 to 18 years.
- College freshmen who live in dorms.
- People with weakened immune systems.
- Travelers to countries where meningococcal disease is common.

Ask your doctor about the benefits and risks of meningococcal vaccines.

- For more information about the meningococcal disease as well as the vaccines, visit:
- www.doh.wa.gov/Immunization
- www.nmaus.org
- www.acha.org
- www.cdc.gov/vaccines
- www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/ about/risk-community.html

Ask your doctor or student health clinic about which other vaccines you need to be ready for college!

Be sure to keep a record of all your immunizations.



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### Meningococcal disease

#### What is it?

Meningococcal disease is a **serious** illness caused by a bacteria that can infect the blood or areas around the brain and spinal cord. The most common form of the disease is meningitis, which can be fatal. In fatal cases, death can occur in as little as a few hours.

#### How is it spread?

Meningococcal disease is spread by coughing, kissing, or sharing anything by mouth with an infected person, such as eating utensils or toothbrushes. The disease is not spread by breathing the air near an infected person. It requires close contact.

Call your doctor right away if you are in close contact with someone who is known or suspected to have meningococcal disease.

#### Is it serious?

Yes. Even if treated, 10 to 12 percent of people who get it will die from it. Of the survivors, about 11 to 19 percent lose their arms or legs, become deaf or brain damaged, or suffer other complications.

#### Am I at risk?

The risk of meningococcal disease among college students is low. However, college freshmen, particularly **those who live in dorms**, **are at modestly increased risk for meningococcal disease** relative to other people their age. You may be considered high risk if:

- You have a weakened immune system.
- You are traveling to countries where meningococcal disease is common.

#### How can I avoid it?

You can protect yourself by:

- Getting the meningococcal vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends one dose at age 11 or 12 and a booster dose at age 16. If you missed your shot after turning 16, get it now.
- Not sharing items that have touched someone else's mouth, such as eating utensils, cups, bottles, cigarettes, or lip balm.

## It starts with you... **Get vaccinated!**

Before vou start college vou

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may need to get the following vaccinations:
☐ 1 meningococcal booster
☐ 2 doses of <b>MMR</b> (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine
☐ 1 dose of <b>Tdap</b> (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis)
☐ 2 doses of <b>varicella</b> (chickenpox) vaccine
3 doses of <b>hepatitis B</b> vaccine
3 doses of <b>HPV</b> (human papillomavirus) vaccine
Some of these vaccines are recommended and others are

required for enrollment.